

# REMOTE ISLAND SOILS EDUCATION

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## WHAT IS THE RISE PROGRAM?

The RISE program is a 4-week comprehensive soils training and implementation program designed to increase the biology of the soil so farmers can once again build healthy, self-sustaining and thriving remote island communities in Fiji.

The program starts by bringing professional soil scientists and students to the remote islands to teach and train the remote farmers on how they can develop healthy soil that will grow organic and health focused crops.

It then reintroduces the crops and understanding needed to move them away from their current reliance on the government food subsidies of processed foods that has created one of the highest rates of diabetes in the world.

They then teach and train them on how to plant and/or harvest naturally growing income crops that will slow and eventually reverse the emigration of their youth to the primary islands for income opportunities and preserve the very future of these beautiful islands.

The RISE program also helps the farmers return to traditional styles of farming and the introduction of new practices like composting instead of burning their fields.



## THE 2017 RISE PROGRAM

The goals of this 4-week program:

- Teach the methods of composting and build composts on the farms
- Build a school garden to teach and inspire the children to farm
- Build a greenhouse for starters and long-term goals
- Build a chicken tractor (eggs and fertilizer)
- Build Dilo nut dryer (Dilo Oil production)
- Plant Vanilla for a medium-term income crop
- Survey island for future programs (livestock, forestry, aquaculture)

During week 1 Mike Smith of Organic Matters Foundation, lead classes, talked about the biology of the soil, and how we can make the soil healthier by using what is found naturally on the island.

Mike talked about composting and using elements from the island and the ocean and natural soil amendments.

## WEEKS 2-4

During these 2 weeks the soils school students and myself made the school garden, planted vanilla, and built a greenhouse/shading structure for growing Sandalwood and Teak starters.

The program also teaches the villagers how to harvest, process and store naturally growing income crops like Virgin Coconut Oil and Dilo Oil.



## LONG TERM THINKING

The RISE program also helps the remote villagers to think about long term economic crop goals that are readily available to them and how they can plant and care for them until harvest.

High value crops like Vanilla, Teak, Sandalwood can be easily grown and harvested on the remote islands and have a long shelf life from harvest to market.

Vanilla requires 3-5 years before the first harvest of vanilla beans.

Sandalwood and teak requires 12-20 years before harvest, but each sandalwood and teak can generate from \$3-5 thousand Fijian dollars. Each family is encouraged to plant 50 or more trees each year, eventually generating over \$150,000+ a year.

With shrinking populations due to emigration, the people living on the remote islands are worried their remote island Fijian culture could soon die out. The income opportunities the RISE program provides to individual families is helping to keep their youth from leaving and is even bringing back the lost talent.



## THANK YOU

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